



Office Of The Fire Marshal
Town of Seymour
1 First Street
Seymour, Connecticut 06483

**BLASTING REGULATIONS TESTOMONY ON PROPOSED HOUSE BILL 6494
GIVEN BY SEYMOUR FIRE MARSHAL PAUL WETOWITZ ON THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19 2015**

My name is Paul Wetowitz. I am the Fire Marshal for Seymour Connecticut. I have been in the Office for 32 years. Fourteen and one half of those years I have been the Fire Marshal. I have been in the Seymour Fire Department for 37 years. I also served as a Seymour part time police officer for 8 years and in the Seymour Ambulance Association for over 20 years. I have a degree in fire science from the University of New Haven. I have attended many thousands of hours of training over the 32 years in the fire marshal's office including blasting.

I am here to give my support for Propose House Bill 6494 on creating a complaint procedure for reporting alleged property damage from blasting and updating the regulations. A local fire marshal can only enforce what the regulations state. I remember a profound statement from one of the State trainers when I was going to school for a police officer. He said if there is no law prohibiting the activity, then there is no enforcement by the police officer. Fire Marshals are under the same policy.

Property owners come to me complaining about many things regarding blasting. Some of the complaints include their house is shaking, windows are rattling, items have fallen off shelves and broke, they are very scared, they were never notified about the blasting, damage has occurred to their home and they are afraid of losing their water well. If after my investigation, I find that the seismic results were well within the State regulations and no other regulations were violated, there is almost no enforcement action I can take. We can do a better job of helping the residents that are around the blasting site without prohibiting blasting. I am not against blasting. I am for improving it for our residents.

You may hear this is what the blasting company has insurance for. If rock flies off the site and damages something, it has been my experience that there is almost never a denial. If the claim is for damage from the shock or sound wave, the insurance company probably looks at the blaster's log and seismic results the same way I would. If they do not find any issues, what do you think they would do?

For those of you that have never been in a structure when blasting occurs, it can be a profound experience. I have had this experience on both my house and other structures. And even though I knew what was going on, I still had concerns for my home.

House Bill 6494 can start the process of evaluation of the regulations for potential change by the State. This is a great idea. Any potential change in the regulations should be completely evaluated by experts before being brought to the legislators for discussion, potential modifying, compromise and hopefully change in the future. It can provide better protection of resident's property and make them safer.

Finally, blasters may say that the regulations are fine. There is no reason to change them. It is not that bad. It will cost them more money and resources to meet new regulations. It may affect business and the building of structures. It will slow the economy down. People are overacting. The new regulations will close my business. My question is shouldn't we see what the potential proposals are before we make any conclusions? These bills will not change the regulations. They will only allow for the creations of proposals which can then be further discussed. I want to leave you with a final thought. We can do a better job.

Submitted by,



Paul Wetowitz
Seymour Fire Marshal
February 18 2015

Cc. File